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**AFGHANISTAN**

# Alternative Development Update

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## Afghan farmers begin exporting produce to Dubai

Opening new markets for Afghan agricultural goods is a key part of U.S. efforts to provide economic alternatives to poppy production. In the eastern Afghanistan province of Nangarhar, an Afghan commercial farmer has met his first order for 60 tons of fresh produce from Dubai. Other Afghan vegetable traders are now preparing 30,000 kilogram shipments of red onions on a biweekly basis to Dubai-based airline industry caterers. By mid February 2007, Afghan traders will begin shipping high-value gourmet vegetables (e.g. romanesco, baby carrots, radicchio, and Boston red lettuce, among others) to Dubai wholesalers.

USAID provided vegetable and fruit seed as well as technical assistance to these farmers to increase their farms' productivity and output quality. USAID also assisted the commercial farmers in the production of high-value vegetables for export by established collective marketing mechanisms and strong market linkages to new markets.



Pomegranates from eastern Afghanistan packaged for export to Dubai  
Photo: USAID/Afghanistan



Wholesalers prepare produce for export  
Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

## Program Results:

- From 2003-2005, USAID increased income derived from agriculture by 9%.
- Assisted the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce and Irrigation as well as Kabul University's Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences.
- To date, **seed and fertilizer has been distributed to 660,000 farmers** in all 34 provinces.
- Rapid implementation of cash for work programs has generated more than 5.8 million work days of paid labor and resulted in approximately **\$22 million in wages paid to more than 288,000 laborers**.
- **Over 26,000 women in Nangarhar have benefited from household income generating activities** including handicrafts, embroidery, tailoring, small-scale agricultural processing, training to develop agricultural skills, and cash-for-work projects.
- Negotiations are now underway to **export 1,300 metric tons of red raisins** from Kandahar to Ukraine with a contract sale price of over \$1 million.



## **David Murdock, CEO of Dole Foods, to Visit Afghanistan and Support Farm Development**

As a result of the meeting with USAID, Dole Foods, Inc. plans to aid agricultural development in Afghanistan. CEO David Murdock discussed plans to provide technical assistance, project management and marketing support to four or five large mechanized farms in Afghanistan, each of which will employ 300-500 Afghan workers. The USAID/Dole project has been discussed by Mr. Murdock with President Bush and President Karzai, and will utilize advanced agricultural technologies on approximately 2,000 acres of land. Mr. Murdock plans to announce this partnership in a keynote speech at a USAID agriculture trade show in early April.

## **Cash-for-work projects during the upcoming eradication season**

Fourteen new cash-for-work infrastructure projects totaling \$1.4 million are planned during the upcoming poppy harvest and eradication season in Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar. These labor-intensive projects, including the construction of cobblestone roads and flood protection walls, will provide over 141,000 days of salaried work. The projects will commence during the critical poppy cultivation and eradication period, thereby providing economic immediate alternatives to farmers and rural laborers.

## **New gravel compacted roads in Helmand**

USAID has announced the start of the construction of 156 kilometers of gravel-compacted roads in central Helmand, which has been contracted to three local construction companies. The 156 km of gravel-compacted roads include: Yaklang to Yakchal road in Nahri Seraj district (20 km); Darweshan Road in Garmser district (33 km); Chai-i-Anjer to Girishk road in Nad Ali/Nahri Seraj districts (33 km); Naw Zad road in Naw Zad district (27 km); Musa Qala road in Musa Qala district (18 km); and the Spin Masjid to Chai-i-Anjer road in Nahri Seraj districts (25 km). These roads will link to existing district roads in Helmand.

## **Livestock feed distribution in Helmand and Kandahar**

USAID has signed a contract with an Afghan firm for the distribution of 10,000 metric tons of livestock feed to over 10,000 farmers in Helmand and Kandahar. A livestock specialist will carry out quality control laboratory tests of the feed mix prior to distribution, which is scheduled to be delivered starting in early February.

## **Herat Farmers Take Advantage of USAID Winter Programs**

165 farmers are participating in a greenhouse program which allows them to raise vegetables in winter and receive income during a period when they usually receive none at all. Farmers participating in saffron growing activities were pleased to harvest approximately 2 kg of saffron per half jerib of land. They were able to sell the saffron for \$380 per kg, resulting in a good profit for the participants. Farmers in areas with poor irrigation and water access have received chickpea seeds, which perform better in water-poor areas, for spring planting.